

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN TO IMMEDIATELY ADDRESS THE GROWING PROBLEM OF ABDUCTION TO AND RETENTION OF UNITED STATES CITIZEN MINOR CHILDREN IN JAPAN, TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO RETURN THESE CHILDREN TO THEIR CUSTODIAL PARENT OR TO THE ORIGINAL JURISDICTION FOR A CUSTODY DETERMINATION IN THE UNITED STATES, TO PROVIDE LEFT-BEHIND PARENTS IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO THEIR CHILDREN, AND TO ADOPT WITHOUT DELAY THE 1980 HAGUE CONVENTION ON THE CIVIL ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2010

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, the United States and Japan have a strong and critical alliance that is vitally important to both of our countries, to the Asia-Pacific region, and to the world. It is based on shared interests and values and our common support for political and economic freedoms, human rights, and international law. Japan now participates in our Pacific Partnership Initiative bringing humanitarian civic assistance to countries in Southeast Asia. Japan is second to none in supporting President Barack Obama's vision of a "world without nuclear weapons" and advocating for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Japan also supports our mission in Afghanistan and has recently doubled its civilian aid to the country providing much needed funds for job training, agriculture support, infrastructure and security training.

But as a friend of Japan and the Japanese people, I am compelled to bring to their attention by resolution a concern involving 269 American children who have been abducted to and/or wrongfully retained in Japan since 1994. These American children are in Japan as a result of kidnapping by a parent with Japanese citizenship following the dissolution of their relationship to the American citizen parent. Research shows that abducted children are at risk of serious emotional and psychological problems and have been found to experience anxiety, eating problems, nightmares, mood swings, sleep disturbances, aggressive behavior, resentment, guilt and fearfulness, and as adults may struggle with identity issues, their own personal relationships and parenting.

Despite a shared concern within the international community, the Japanese government has yet to accede to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction or create any other mechanism to resolve international child abductions. Japan's existing family law system neither recognizes joint custody nor actively enforces parental access agreements for either its own citizens or foreigners. Most troubling, the existing legal system relies exclusively on the voluntary cooperation of the parent or guardian who has abducted the child. American parents must

beg to see their abducted children and have no legal recourse if the taking parent denies them access.

Consequently, American parents are calling on the U.S. Government to urgently intervene and quickly find a diplomatic solution.

I ask for my colleague's support on a bipartisan resolution supported by Rep. CHRISTOPHER SMITH, Rep. MAURICE HINCHEY, Rep. GARY MILLER, and Rep. MARSHA BLACKBURN, calling on the Japanese government to address the growing problem of abduction and retention of American children in Japan. The resolution calls for Japanese officials to work closely with the United States to return these children to their custodial parent or to the original jurisdiction for a custody determination in the United States, and to provide left-behind parents immediate access to their children. Finally, the resolution calls for Japan to adopt without delay the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. The well-being of these children should be an issue where agreement can be reached and distraught parents are reunited with their children. I call on the Government of Japan to work closely with the U.S. Government to resolve current cases and establish an efficient mechanism to resolve future potential cases of abduction.

Cosponsors of this legislation introduced by the Rep. JAMES P. MORAN:

The Honorable CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH.

The Honorable MAURICE D. HINCHEY.

The Honorable GARY G. MILLER.

The Honorable MARSHA BLACKBURN.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDENT VISA SECURITY IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2010

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Student Visa Security Improvement Act, legislation that will strengthen the screening of those seeking student visas and enhance the monitoring of foreign students in the United States.

I fully support allowing foreign students and exchange visitors to enter our country for legitimate academic and cultural purposes. However, recent media reports have disclosed schools that have helped individuals fraudulently obtain student visas or failed to report students that did not attend class. Several 9/11 terrorists overstayed their student visas and details are emerging that the suspected Times Square bomber, Faisal Shahzad, first entered the United States on a student visa.

I am concerned that there are insufficient controls to ensure that those receiving student and exchange visas are properly vetted before being granted admission to the United States. Once they are here, we must ensure they are appropriately monitored. That is why I have introduced the Student Visa Security Improvement Act.

This bill will require Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel stationed at high-risk visa issuing posts overseas to review student and exchange visa applications and conduct interviews with applicants before they are granted a visa. These ICE agents

bring enhanced security and law enforcement experience that will better ensure that prospective foreign students are not security risks.

This bill also will require that foreign students are active participants in the programs in which they are enrolled and are observed at least once every 30 days during an academic term or every 60 days outside an academic term. In addition, the bill requires that changes impacting a student's nonimmigrant status, such as switching to a more sensitive academic major or transferring to another institution, will be reported to the Department of Homeland Security in a more timely manner. These improvements will reduce the opportunity for potential terrorists to use student visas as a back door into the country for the purpose of carrying out terrorist attacks, as happened on 9/11.

Madam Speaker, I greatly value the contributions that foreign students and exchange visitors make to our nation and its cultural diversity. I believe that these bright young people are critically-important public diplomacy tools for our country. But we must ensure they are coming here for the right reasons. The Student Visa Security Improvement Act will enhance homeland security and ensure the integrity of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program. I urge our colleagues to support it.

RECOGNIZING MOUNT CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2010

Mr. SABLAN. Madam Speaker, the National High School Mock Trial Competition is the premier national law related academic tournament for high school students. Mock trial programs are designed to give students an inside perspective on the legal system, providing them with an understanding of the mechanism through which society chooses to resolve many of its disputes.

Participation in a performance-based, hands-on program of this nature provides students with a practical knowledge about how our legal system operates and who the major players are in that system. Mock trial programs help develop young citizens who can sustain and build our nation by making a reasoned and informed commitment to democracy.

Students of Mount Carmel High School have earned the right to represent the Northern Mariana Islands in this year's national competition in Philadelphia. They will compete with teams from around the country.

Mount Carmel students have a tradition of excellence in oratory. The school represented the Northern Mariana Islands in the National We the People program two years in a row. Mr. Ryan Ortizo, one of the members of this year's competition in Philadelphia just won first place in the CNMI Attorney General's Cup competition.

One has to admire and be proud of the dedication of the students and the commitment of the teaching staff at Mount Carmel School for instilling the passion for debate and public speaking year after year.